

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

René González: 'I went to US to fight actions harming Cuba'
— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 29 AUGUST 12, 2013

Vigilante acquitted in Trayvon Martin killing

BY SETH GALINSKY

A six-person jury in Florida found George Zimmerman not guilty July 13 on second-degree murder and manslaughter charges for killing 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Fla., in February 2012. Millions of workers have reacted with anger to Zimmerman walking free, feeling he

VIGILANTISM: ENEMY OF THE WORKING CLASS

—editorial, p. 11

belongs behind bars and concerned the case will encourage violence by other anti-working-class vigilantes.

It was only because of the widespread protests and condemnation that Zimmerman was brought to trial for his fatal shooting of the Black teen-

Continued on page 7

With Detroit bankruptcy, rulers target unions

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The city of Detroit filed for bankruptcy July 18 in the largest such municipal filing in U.S. history. The move by Emergency Financial Manager Kevyn Orr — appointed with broad powers by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder in March to run Detroit, effectively replacing the city's elected officials — involves tearing up all city labor contracts and targeting in particular pensions and health care of public workers.

Of the city's \$18 billion in long-term debt, more than \$3.5 billion is owed to the pension fund for 10,000 current employees and 20,000 retirees, along with some \$6 billion for retirees' health care costs. Through bankruptcy proceedings, Orr is seeking to slash funds owed to these workers by more than 90 percent, reported

Continued on page 11

Socialist Workers in Omaha respond to political break-in

Organize campaign to defend workers rights



Militant photos: above, Alex Huinil; inset, Jacob Perasso
July 16 break-in at house of Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Omaha City Council in May elections, was clear act of political intimidation, right. Above, Perasso addresses March 24 picket of postal workers against proposed cuts in Saturday delivery, one of many fights the party has and will continue to join with other working people in region.

BY LAURA GARZA AND JOE SWANSON

OMAHA, Neb. — "I knew this was no ordinary robbery. This is what's done when the authorities or their vigilante friends want to send you a message," Jacob Perasso told the *Militant*, in an interview following a July 16 break-in at his house. Perasso was the Socialist Workers Party candidate

for City Council District 4 in the May elections here and is active in support of workers' struggles, fights against police brutality and other social protests in the interests of working people.

"They are trying to intimidate us, but we are going to fight back," Perasso said, announcing plans to or-

Continued on page 4

'Militant' worker-correspondents reporting from Egypt!

See page 2, learn how you can help

Washington farmworkers' strikes win wage raise, better conditions



Militant/Clay Dennison

Farmworkers listen to explanation of agreement reached with owner of Sakuma Bros. Farms that granted wage increase and other gains July 25 after workers organized two walkouts.

BY CLAY DENNISON

BURLINGTON, Wash. — More than 200 farmworkers returned to the job July 26, after winning higher wages and better conditions following two strikes at Sakuma Bros. Farms in July.

The first walkout started July 12, after worker Federico Lopez was

fired for challenging the piece rate. Workers, who don't belong to any established union, ended the strike after winning Lopez's reinstatement and the transfer of what they described as an abusive foreman. Workers walked out again July 22 in response to the company's refusal to implement pay

Continued on page 7

Korean people celebrate 1953 victory over US imperialism

BY STEVE CLARK

PYONGYANG, Democratic People's Republic of Korea — A Socialist Workers Party leadership delegation of Steve Clark, James Harris and Tom Baumann has been here to join celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the July 27, 1953,

cease-fire, marking the Korean people's victory over U.S. imperialism's murderous 1950-53 war to conquer the peninsula.

To this day Washington refuses to sign a peace treaty ending the state of war and, in violation of Korea's national sovereignty, maintains more than 28,000 U.S. troops in South Korea. The U.S. capitalist rulers aim to enforce the partition of Korea they

Continued on page 11

Thousands sign to put socialist candidates on New York ballot

BY BERNIE SENTER

NEW YORK — Dozens of volunteers fanned out across the five boroughs here, collecting more than 3,000 signatures in the first week's effort to put the Socialist Workers Party candidates for city offices on the ballot — Dan Fein for mayor, John Studer for comptroller, and Deborah Liatos for public advocate. Campaign

Continued on page 3

Also Inside:

- Kurds press for autonomy in midst of Syria civil war 2
- Calif. prisoners protest solitary, harsh conditions 3
- 'Women in Cuba' reviewed in journal of social work 6
- Strike in Tunisia protests killing of opposition leader 7

Kurds press for autonomy in midst of Syria civil war

BY SUSAN LAMONT

As the civil war in Syria grinds on, Kurds in the country’s northeast bordering the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq are pressing for autonomy.

On July 19 the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the strongest Kurdish organization in Syria, proposed a new independent council and government for the region, according to Reuters.

The PYD is allied with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey, which has waged a 30-year armed struggle against the Turkish government.

The Kurds are an oppressed nationality of some 25 to 30 million, concentrated in an area that spans eastern Turkey, northwest Iran, northern Iraq and northeast Syria.

Denied a nation state by both the imperialist powers and the region’s capitalist governments over many decades, advances in recent years won by Kurds in Iraq, Turkey and now Syria register a new stage in their fight for national rights and a homeland.

Some 1.7 million Kurds in Syria have tried to stay aloof from the contest for power in the country that erupted in March 2011 between the government of President Bashar al-Assad and various competing bourgeois forces. At the same time over the past year Kurdish militias have begun to assert control over the predominantly Kurdish districts of northeast Syria with little resistance from the Assad regime.

Clashes have been taking place between Kurdish militias and some forces opposed to the government. In mid-July fighters from the Committees for the

Protection of the Kurdish People expelled the Islamist jihadist groups Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State of Iraq from the Kurdish town of Ras al-Ain and four other villages in Hasaka province, Agence France-Presse reported July 23.

“The proliferation of newly hung Kurdish flags and signs in the mother tongue in al-Hassaka province give the impression of liberation after years of rule under the Ba’ath party, which expropriated land in Kurdish areas, suppressed expressions of Kurdish identity and arrested thousands of Kurdish activists, especially after riots shook the Kurdish areas in 2004,” *Financial Times* journalist Loveday Morris wrote last October.

Moves by Syria’s Kurds to consolidate control over their territory brought a sharp response from the government of Turkey, home to one-half the region’s Kurdish population. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Kurdish groups in Syria should refrain from “any de facto autonomy,” before a post-Assad parliament is elected, reported *Today’s Zaman*, an English-language paper in Istanbul, on July 24.

Kurds in Turkey, backed by Turkish supporters of Kurdish rights, are pressing the government to live up to a cease-fire agreement with the PKK reached in March that includes provisions for a greater degree of national and cultural rights.

A major factor in the new rise of the Kurdish national struggle is the establishment of a largely autonomous Kurdistan in northern Iraq following the 2003

US socialist candidates talk with fellow workers in Egypt



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City mayor, Dan Fein (right), speaks with Raef Elwishee in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, July 28. Elwishee, an Egyptian-American building worker, told Fein and Mary Martin, SWP candidate for Seattle mayor, that he and his son were tortured in 2007 by Egyptian government forces under Hosni Mubarak as U.S. officials witnessed.

Elwishee said he supported the recent overthrow of the Morsi government. “The Muslim Brotherhood did nothing to revive the economy and divided the country — for or against the Brotherhood. But most Muslims do not agree with those positions.”

“Working people in the U.S. and Egypt face common problems,” Martin said. “That is why we are here to learn about your struggles.”

“Our history is just beginning,” Elwishee said. “We’ve moved from dictatorship to democratic openings over a very short time. Workers are starting to become active now.”

— PAUL MAILHOT

overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime by Washington.

The Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq has called for a congress of all Kurdish organizations from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, to be held in August in Erbil, capital of Iraq’s Kurdish territory.

The Iraq-based newspaper *Rudaw* reported that Masoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Regional Government

and head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, had talks with representatives of 39 Kurdish political parties from all four countries to promote the conference.

The meeting will be “the first congress to be held on Kurdish land, and the first to gather all Kurdish parties and groups from across the political spectrum,” regional government spokesman Kawa Mahmoud said, according to a July 23 Bloomberg News report.

Help ‘Militant’ cover workers’ struggles around the world

“We’re going to bring solidarity to working people in Egypt, who are fighting with renewed confidence since the July 3 overthrow of the Mohammed Morsi government,” Socialist Workers Party leader Paul Mailhot said July 26. “And we’ll be writing articles that will bring to life what working people in Egypt are discussing and doing.”

Mailhot and other worker-correspondents from the U.S. and United Kingdom flew to Cairo July 27 to take part in a one-week fact-finding trip. Reporting trips like this cost thousands of dollars and the *Militant* is appealing for funds from readers. Donations can be sent to: The Militant, 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

The Militant

Vol. 77/No. 29

Closing news date: July 31, 2013

Editor: Doug Nelson
Associate editor: John Studer
Circulation director: Louis Martin

Editorial volunteers: Tom Baumann, Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Seth Galinsky, Eleanor García, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in July, one week in August and two weeks in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. **Telephone:** (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 76 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

THE MILITANT

Expanding readership through door-to-door sales

One of the main ways the ‘Militant’ gets into the hands of working people is through door-to-door neighborhood sales. The recently completed subscription drive won nearly 2,800 new and renewing readers worldwide. Join the effort to keep expanding the reach of the workers paper!



Militant/Dag Tirsén

“I’ve learned so much reading the *Militant*,” John Murtagh (left), a printer in Manchester, England, told distributor Paul Davies July 16.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ \$20 for 6 months

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

☐ \$35 for 1 year

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$8 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 12 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

SWP ballot drive in NYC

Continued from front page
supporters are on a two-week drive to get 7,500 signatures, double the required number.

Miriam Canales, a retired teacher and longtime resident of the Dyckman Houses in the Inwood area of Upper Manhattan, has collected 60 signatures from friends and neighbors, and is working to get more. “I’ve called up my friends and told them about Dan Fein’s campaign. I say, ‘I want to talk to you about a candidate for mayor I’m supporting, from the Socialist Workers Party. I tell them he’s a factory worker, like us, and he knows the problems we’re facing. He doesn’t promise anything, except that he will fight with us.’ So people sign, and sometimes they go next door and ask their neighbor to sign too.”

“Then I went over to the CVS pharmacy and signed up the clerk there that I know. And I signed up the sales girl in the Plum boutique and also the owner of the shoe store. I’ve lived here for over 40 years, so I know a lot of people in the neighborhood.”

“I haven’t been paid in two months,” Tammy Swan said as she signed the petition being circulated by Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for Manhattan borough president. “I keep calling and they tell me to be patient,” said Swan, who works for the city government as a child care worker. “I can’t be patient. This is my only income and I’ve already gotten two eviction notices.”

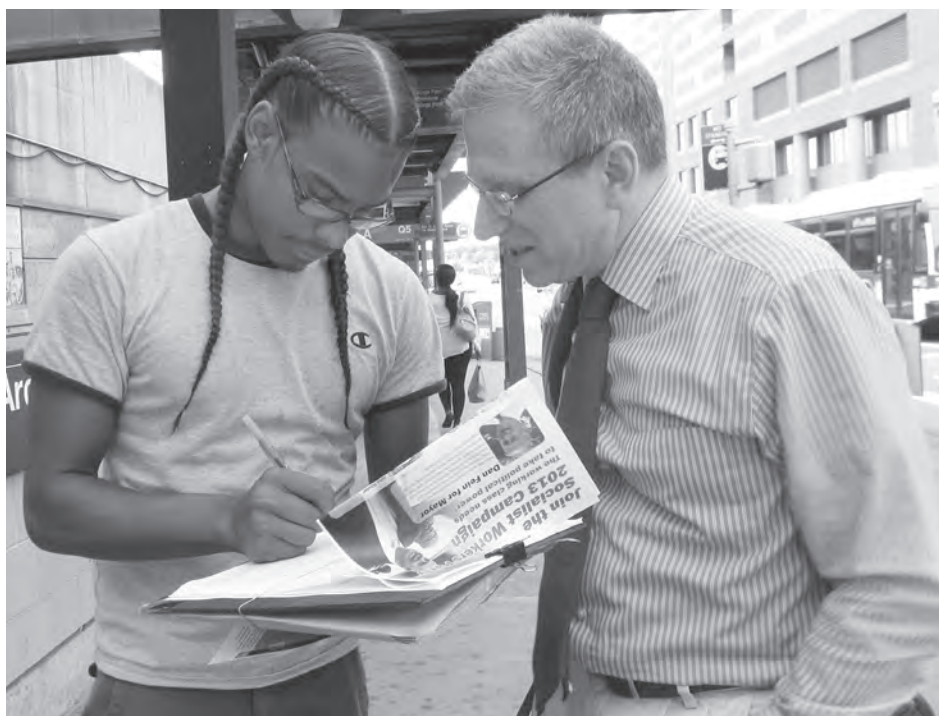
Mel Walker, owner of Finally Mel’s barbershop in the East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn, plays a video interview with Dan Fein on the shop’s TV screen for customers to see. Eleven people signed Walker’s petition the first day.

During most of the petitioning drive, Fein is in Cairo, Egypt, part of a team of worker-correspondents for the *Militant*

showing solidarity with the millions of Egyptian workers whose mobilizations toppled the unpopular government of Mohammed Morsi.

Twenty-three people signed up at a meeting here to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the July 26 assault on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba led by Fidel Castro that opened the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and culminated in the Jan. 1, 1959, victory of the Cuban Revolution.

Supporters of the socialist campaign have set a meet-the-candidates event with a dinner, program and social open to the public on Saturday, Aug. 3. The event starts at 6 p.m. at the Manhattan campaign offices, 307 West 36th Street, 10th Floor.



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Seth Galinsky, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Queens borough president, petitions in Jamaica, Queens, July 28 to place party’s citywide candidates on ballot.

Calif. prisoners protest solitary, harsh conditions

BY BETSEY STONE

CORCORAN, Calif. — For the third time in two years, prisoners in California are on a hunger strike, fighting to end inhumane conditions faced by thousands of inmates being held in long-term solitary confinement.

The strike began July 8, when some 30,000 prisoners refused meals in prisons throughout California. Prison officials said July 27 that 601 inmates at nine California prisons remain on hunger strike — as defined by having declined at least nine consecutive meals, reported Reuters.

Prisoners in solitary confinement in the Security Housing Units (SHU) at Pelican Bay in the far north of California initiated two strikes in 2011, as well as the current one. They have

put forward five core demands, including an end to long-term solitary confinement, an end to group punishment, abolition of a snitch system that puts inmates accused of gang affiliation in solitary until they accuse others, and the right to adequate food, phone calls and warm clothing.

In the wake of the 2011 strikes some changes were made. Prison authorities began to review cases of prisoners in solitary, releasing 208 into the general population. But inmates say there has been no progress on the key issue of keeping thousands of prisoners in isolation.

“In California, nearly 12,000 people in prison are held in solitary confinement for 23 to 24 hours a day in small, windowless cells without sunlight, fresh air, meaningful human contact or

constructive activity for many years, even decades,” according to the Prison Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition.

Prison officials have characterized the hunger strike as a “disturbance,” organized by prison gangs. While refusing to address the prisoners’ demands, they have retaliated against the hunger strikers, moving 14 of the Pelican Bay strikers to more isolated quarters, according the Prison Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition.

Demonstrations in support of the strikers have taken place throughout the state.

Sylvia Rogokos, a member of California Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement whose brother is a hunger striker in his 23rd year in the Pelican Bay SHU, told the *Militant* she is proud of the unity across racial lines of families that have come together in the fight.

On July 13, hundreds demonstrated outside the Corcoran State Prison here where more than 1,600 are held in solitary.

Maria Ceballos, whose uncle has been in the SHU here for eight years, drove with her family from Los Angeles to California’s Central Valley where the prison is located. “Inside the prison they try to divide them,” she pointed out. “It’s important to be united. That way we can put an end to what’s happening.”

Wendy Lyons contributed to this article.

Special offers with ‘Militant’ subscription

The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free
from pages of the ‘Militant’
\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes
\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

See distributors on page 10

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

Cuba and Angola

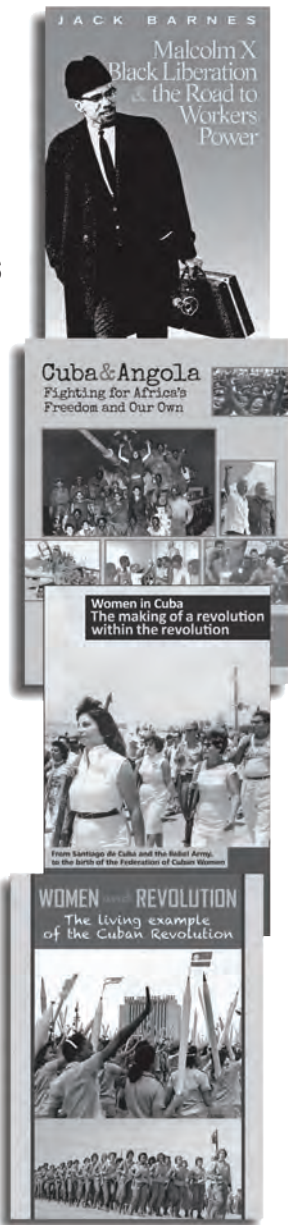
Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own
by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez
\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)

Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution
by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution
by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)



Help put the socialist candidates on the ballot in Des Moines

The Socialist Workers Party campaign is organizing a two-day effort to place Ellen Brickley, David Rosenfeld and Margaret Trowe on the ballot for city council.

Sat. Aug. 10

11 a.m. — meet at campaign office
5:30 p.m. — dinner and reception
7 p.m. — campaign rally

Sun. Aug. 11

10 a.m. — class
noon-3 p.m. — campaigning

3707 Douglas Ave.

Tel: (515) 707-1779

Omaha political break-in

Continued from front page
ganize a broad international defense campaign.

“They have picked on the wrong guy,” Carl Tyler, 74, a longtime resident of north Omaha who knows Perasso from common political work, told the *Militant*. “Jacob is an open book, he doesn’t have anything to hide. He looks out for the working people and I stand with people like that.”

“Those behind this are challenging our right to be politically active,” Perasso said. “In response, we will step up our political activity in Omaha and the region. We’ll continue to run for political office, advancing demands in the interests of workers, taking our campaign door to door to introduce the *Militant* newspaper in working-class neighborhoods and asking workers we meet to join in the defense effort. We’re also going to open a public campaign headquarters.

“Driven by the deepening crisis in their capitalist economic system, the bosses are speeding up production and pushing to drive wages, working conditions and workers’ very dignity down,” Perasso said. “One of the things the campaign talks with workers about, and gets a good response on, is the need to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions back to work to build hospitals, schools, child care centers — things workers need.

“We call for a big increase in the minimum wage. Under capitalism, wages are set from the bottom up,” Perasso said. “Forcing the government to raise the minimum wage will push wages up for all workers. Fighting for these immediate measures would reduce divisions between us and boost our confidence, making the working class stronger to fight against the attacks.

“We also introduce workers to the international campaign to win freedom for the Cuban Five,” Perasso said. “These revolutionaries were framed and imprisoned here for their efforts to defend the Cuban Revolution from attacks and

provocations by paramilitary groups that operate from U.S. soil with the tacit backing of Washington. Workers in this country who have relatives and friends caught up by the cops, courts and prisons can identify with their frame-up and treatment under U.S. ‘justice.’

“The fight we are involved in here is an opportunity to defend the political rights of the entire working class,” Perasso said.

Those who organized the break-in did not steal valuable items out in plain sight — a laptop, an e-reader and a tablet computer, Perasso said. And rather than conceal their intent, the culprit left clear evidence of a political purpose, pulling out drawers and files and leaving them strewn about the house.

“The only thing taken was a cellphone that contained phone records of people I called and emailed while I was part of a fight earlier this year against police brutality in Omaha. The phone would provide information for anyone looking to harass political activists,” said Perasso.

Appeal for solidarity

“Our response is to appeal for solidarity — an injury to one is an injury to all. When anyone’s rights are challenged, we all need to speak out to defend everyone’s rights to free speech and association,” said Perasso. The Socialist Workers Party in Omaha is asking all supporters of political rights, wherever they may be, to join in calling on the mayor and other city officials to press the police to find and prosecute those who organized the break-in.

A neighbor’s surveillance video captured images of a man casing the house, breaking in, and later scurrying out from behind the house. Omaha police were given a copy of the video.

In getting the defense campaign off the ground, supporters of the SWP have learned about harassment of others who are politically active in the area.

James Dugan, a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and an activist with Perasso in the fight against police brutality, said that his car tires were slashed a month ago. Despite repeated calls to the Omaha police, no cop has ever come to investigate.

Perasso has been working with Dugan and others since the spring to demand action against police caught on video beating and attempting to frame up Octavious, Juaquez and Demetrius Johnson, three brothers in the Black community of north Omaha. Four cops were eventually fired as a result of community protest. Several of those organizing the protests have been followed and stopped by the police repeatedly.

Perasso, 36, who lived in Omaha a



Militant photos: Top, Jacob Perasso; Left, Helen Meyers
Top, more than 120 workers in north Omaha discuss taking action against police brutality at community meeting April 1. Left, Victoria Raviola Thomas, a nurse, signs petition to place Jacob Perasso, right, on ballot for city council, Jan. 19, 2013.

decade ago, returned in 2012 to help re-establish the party here. He worked as a meat packer at the ConAgra cut and kill plant here in 2002 and joined with fellow workers in the United Food and Commercial Workers to defend workers who were targeted by the bosses for their union activity, fight for union recognition and in defense of the rights of immigrant workers.

A major manufacturing center in the Midwest, Omaha has been the site of bloody labor battles over decades between the bosses and railroad and packinghouse workers.

The Omaha area was a battleground in the Teamsters’ efforts to organize over-the-road truckers in the 1930s and the union remains one of the region’s largest.

Omaha is home to the national headquarters of the Union Pacific Railroad, ConAgra, and Mutual of Omaha, in addition to Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway. In May SWP campaign supporters joined a United Mine Workers action in Omaha at the annual stockholders meeting of Berkshire Hathaway as well as in Des Moines, Iowa, outside the offices of Buffett’s company, to protest moves to slash the UMW’s contract at a subsidiary in Utah.

Large banks, including the First National, have tentacles throughout the state, tying farmers into debt as they seek to finance seed and fertilizer as well as farm equipment.

In recent decades packinghouse workers have fought the bosses to organize the slaughterhouses and defend themselves from dangerous conditions, speedup and efforts to divide them by race or immigration status.

In the course of these struggles, workers and political militants have faced frame-ups, company thugs and cop vio-

lence and provocations.

Earlier threats

When Perasso and his supporters collected signatures to put him on the ballot earlier this year, they found a receptive ear from working people. But they also ran into threats from political enemies of the working class.

Campaign supporter Frank Forrestal was accosted in February by a thug who told him, “You deserve to die, you commie bastard.”

In front of Forrestal, the goon called a friend saying, “Come down right away. We need to beat the s--t out of him.” In order to avoid confrontation, Forrestal left.

“It is precisely to put pressure against those who would take such measures that we need to respond publicly with a fight for our right to speak out,” Perasso told the *Militant*.

Documentation on the incident was filed along with dozens of other reports of harassment sent by workers to support the party’s application to have the Federal Election Commission continue its exemption from having to file the names of contributors to its election campaigns, opening them to potential harassment from government spy agencies, bosses and rightists.

The SWP won an important victory for its campaign supporters and for the working class as a whole in April, when the FEC, which had threatened to weaken or eliminate the protections the party had won against persecution in the past, had to admit the evidence of past and present harassment was more than enough to grant the extension.

Perasso will be bringing the new defense campaign to the Aug. 2-3 Black August Weekend Human Rights-Political Prisoners Commemorative Festival at the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation Center in north Omaha. The event is organized to win support for the fight to free Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, two Black Panther Party members who were framed up and have been incarcerated for more than 40 years.

Perasso will speak at the event on the case of the Cuban Five. He will have just returned from participating in the Seventh Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba held in Venezuela July 24-27.

To find out how you can get involved in the free speech fight in Omaha, contact the SWP, P.O. Box 7908, Omaha, NE 68107. Email: swpomaha@fastmail.com; telephone: (402) 779-7696.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CANADA

Montreal

Federal Government Complicit: Railway Disaster in Lac Mégantic Highlights Bosses’ Profit Drive. Speaker: Annette Kouri, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 9, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, room 204, Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

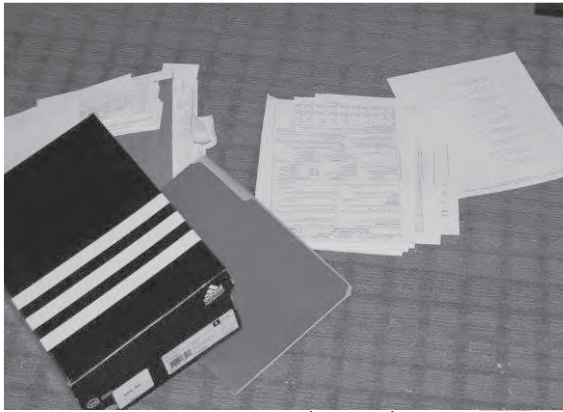
—CALENDAR—

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Black August Weekend: Human Rights-Political Prisoner Commemorative Festival in Support of the Omaha Two, Mondo we Langa (aka David Rice) and Ed Poindexter.

Fri., Aug. 2: 6 p.m., live music; 8:30 p.m., film showing of *Cointelpro*. **Sat., Aug. 3:** 10 a.m., DVD interview with Poindexter and we Langa, leaders of Omaha Black Panther Party in 1960s, framed up and imprisoned for more than 40 years. 11 a.m., panel presentation on Cuban Five, Cuban revolutionaries in U.S. prisons; 1 p.m., keynote speaker Charles E. Jones, author, *Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*; 2 p.m., panel discussion, includes Neb. state Sen. Ernie Chambers and Buddy Hogan, Omaha NAACP president at time of we Langa and Poindexter’s arrest. *Malcolm X Memorial Foundation Center, 3448 Evans St., Tel.: (800) 645-9287.*



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Scenes from break-in into Perasso’s house July 16 in Omaha, Neb. Culprit left political and personal files strewn on the floor. Right, rear door window was smashed. “Those behind this are challenging our right to be politically active,” said Perasso, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the region.



ON THE PICKET LINE

Oakland, Calif., airport fast food workers fight for right to unionize

OAKLAND, Calif. — Airport fast food workers and supporters picketed outside Oakland International Airport Terminal 2 July 14 in a fight for better job conditions and the right to unionize free of company harassment and victimization. Picketers passed out flyers urging travelers to boycott Subway and other concessionaires.

“I’m out here fighting for my rights,” said Hayat Selmani, a cashier at Subway who had her hours cut after she signed a union petition. She, along with workers at Auntie Annie’s, Jamba Juice and other companies, have been fighting around issues of overtime pay, vacation and sick days, breaks and work schedules.

HMS Host is looking to prevent unionization at nonunion food locations such as Subway and pressing concession contracts at outlets organized by UNITE HERE Local 2850, which represents a majority of fast-food workers at the airport.

HMS Host operates food and dining service in 112 airports around the world, as well 99 highway travel plazas in the U.S. and Canada, according to the company’s website.

Subway worker Hakima Arhab was fired last year after she began to work with UNITE HERE to stop violations of the Port of Oakland’s living wage ordinance that sets standards for wages, holiday and sick pay.

The union filed a complaint with the Port of Oakland that ruled in her favor, ordering that she and Diamond Ford, a Jamba Juice employee fired for union activity, be reinstated. But the workers have not been given their jobs back, despite an additional ruling by the National Labor Relations Board that Subway and other airport concessionaires violated federal labor laws, including firing and cutting the hours of workers trying to win union recognition.

“I decided to stand up for myself and my coworkers,” Arhab told those who gathered for a rally during the July 14 picket. “I’m fighting to get my job back. For me, for everyone. I’m tired of waiting. The NLRB is not taking action. So we have to take action.”

— Betsey Stone

Coal miners in Colombia strike over pay, safety and job security

Some 5,000 workers at Drummond Company Inc.’s open pit coal mines and port facilities in northern Colombia went on strike July 23, shutting down the entire operation. They are demanding a 9 percent wage increase, better sick pay, improved job safety and job security.

Colombia is the fourth-largest coal exporter in the world. Alabama-based Drummond, the second-largest coal producer in Colombia, employs 5,000 workers directly and as many as 7,000 others through contractors, who pay lower wages and provide fewer benefits.

Drummond offered a 4.75 percent wage increase and a one-time bonus of about \$3,700. Workers want a substantial wage increase, not a bonus, Ever Causado, secretary general of the Sintramienergética union, said by phone from Barranquilla July 26. “A bonus isn’t factored into wages; it’s not used for determining the pensions; it’s useless,” he said.

The union is also demanding that Drummond guarantee jobs for hundreds of Santa Marta port workers who will be laid off when the company finishes installing a conveyor belt loading system.

Miners work 12 hours a day, Causado said, but, the company only gives eight hours sick pay per day.

“This applies to 500 workers out due to job-related injuries,” heavy machine operator Alberto Solano Cordero told the *Militant* by phone from Cesar department. “Sixteen miners have died at the mine in the last 15 years.”

“The company doesn’t follow the safety rules,” he said. “They just want to organize production to be the most profitable and efficient for them.”

“Drummond is carrying off a non-renewable resource, damaging the environment and they are not investing anything in the country,” Solano said. “We want them to at least subsidize education to leave something to our children.”

— Seth Galinsky

UMWA, supporters rally in W.Va. to protest union busting

FAIRMONT, W.Va. — Thousands of miners and supporters demonstrated here July 9 at the 14th rally organized by the United Mine Workers of America to protest the coal bosses’ union-busting assault under the cover of bankruptcy proceedings by Patriot Coal Corp. Buses brought participants from Alabama, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia to the rally at the Fairmont State



Militant/Janet Post

United Mine Workers and supporters rally July 9 in Fairmont, W.Va., in the 14th protest action against Patriot Coal’s bankruptcy scheme aimed at busting union and gutting retiree benefits.

University football practice field.

The miners are battling Patriot Coal’s drive to gut miners’ union contracts and slash health care for 23,000 retired miners and their dependents. On May 29, a federal bankruptcy court in St. Louis ruled in favor of Patriot’s proposal to make cuts in wages and benefits and replace the current health care fund with a Voluntary Benefit Association.

In a well-calculated scheme, Peabody Energy created Patriot in 2007 by spinning off many of its mining operations in West Virginia and Kentucky, including all its union mines east of the Mississippi. A year later, Patriot bought Magnum Coal, a similar spinoff created by Arch Coal.

“What do we have to lose by fighting for the benefits of the older miners?” said Jim Harper, a miner at a local Consol Energy mine since 2007. “I will stand up for them. If we fight now, it sets a good example for the other workers as they consider fighting.”

— Janet Post

Locked-out chemical workers in Quebec ‘defend past gains’

VARENNES, Quebec — Wearing T-shirts with the slogan “Ensemble pour nos acquis” (Together to defend past gains), workers have been picketing outside chemical manufacturer Kronos here since the company locked out

320 members of the National Union of Kronos Employees June 13 — two days before the expiration of their union contract.

Earlier that day, the workers had rejected by 93 percent the bosses’ proposed seven-year agreement, which included contracting out 100 maintenance jobs and cuts to the pension plan, according to workers on the picket line.

“At a given moment you can’t just accept anything,” Steve Chagnon, an instrumentation technician at Kronos for two years, told the *Militant* June 15.

This is the first major contract fight in the 56-year-long history at the Kronos plant in this town about 12 miles southeast of Montreal. Kronos Worldwide, based in Dallas, Texas, manufactures pigments and other chemicals used in a variety of products and industrial processes.

The company has been trying to maintain some production with foremen from other Kronos facilities, Norman Nardini told the *Militant*. “We work with toxic chemicals,” Nardini said. “There could be an accident which could affect the community.”

“What happens here could affect the conditions of workers in other plants in the area,” said electrician Michel Arsenault who has worked for the company for 25 years. “In that sense our fight is a social struggle.”

— John Steele

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 12, 1988

MIAMI — More than 300 Haitians, many of them undocumented farm workers, marched under a searing sun to the offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service here July 23.

Chanting “Justice for Haitians” and carrying placards that read “Green cards for farm workers,” the marchers demanded residence status for the tens of thousands of undocumented immigrants who have been working for many years on U.S. farms and qualify for amnesty under the new immigration laws.

This was the latest of several rallies held here by Haitian farm workers in support of a class-action suit filed on behalf of all migrant farm workers nationwide. The legal action is seeking to change INS policy under which tens of thousands of migrant workers have been denied temporary residence work permits.



August 5, 1963

NEW YORK — Support to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was voted by delegates to the 20th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party held here in July.

“In addition to the vital problem of discrimination, the March is intended to dramatize the problem of unemployment which weights most heavily on Negro workers. A giant march by those who suffer from these evils will strike fear into their enemies on Capitol Hill. The sponsors of the March have pointed out that the struggle for decent jobs for Negroes is ‘inextricably linked with the struggle for decent jobs for all Americans,’ and have called for a federal ‘massive works program to train and employ all Americans at decent wages and at meaningful and dignified labor.’

“Every unemployed worker, every militant unionist should be in Washington August 28.”



August 13, 1938

The breaking of the strike against the Maytag Company of Newton, Iowa, by the National Guard should convince every American worker that to rely on the National Guard, called out by a “friendly” governor, to win a strike is utter folly.

Governor Kraschel called out the guards ostensibly to prevent violence. He ordered the plant closed, and this maneuver fooled some workers who had an idea that the Governor would win the strike for them.

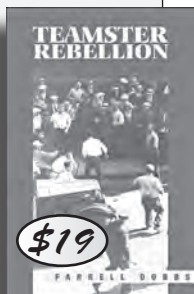
The same thing happened in the Little Steel Strike of last year when the governors of Ohio and Indiana called out the troops and at first ordered the mills closed. At that time the leaders of the C.I.O. were jubilant at the action of the governors. But they reckoned without their host. Not long after the Guard came on the scene, the steel mills were opened and scabs worked under the protection of bayonets.

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle. First in a four-volume series. The other books are *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.

Also in Spanish, Swedish, Farsi, French.

PathfinderPress.com



‘Women played critical role in development of new society’

‘Women in Cuba’ reviewed in journal of social work

The following review of the Pathfinder book *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* was published in the May issue of the Journal of Women and Social Work. The author of the review, Susan Chandler, is an associate professor of social work at the University of Nevada in Reno. Reprinted by permission.

BY SUSAN CHANDLER

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution is a collection of interviews with Vilma Espín, president of the Federation of Cuban Women, or, in Spanish, La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas

IN REVIEW

(FMC), from its founding in 1960 until her death in 2007; Asela de los Santos, a cofounder of the FMC; and Yolanda Ferrer, the FMC’s current general secretary. The interviews are accompanied by editor Mary-Alice Waters’s introductory notes and photographs that bring alive women’s considerable participation in the revolution. The book, brought out by Pathfinder Press, the publishing wing of the Socialist Workers Party, stands unabashedly in support of the Cuban revolution. Having been fed a constant diet of anti-Castro rhetoric for the past 50 years, we in the United States may feel challenged by *Women in Cuba*, but for social workers and feminists alike, the challenge is one worth taking on.

The interviews serve principally to document women’s contributions during the period of armed struggle leading up to the defeat of the Batista dictatorship on January 1, 1959, and the early, heady days of the Cuban revolution. The interviewees all attribute Cuba’s early attention to the well-being of women to Castro’s leadership. In fact, the title of the book is from a 1966 speech in which Castro said, “The phenomenon of women’s participation in the revolution is a revolution within another revolution. If I were asked what is the most revolutionary thing the revolution is doing, I would answer that it is precisely this — the revolution that is occurring among the women of our country” (p. 231).

What I found most engaging were the women’s accounts of how Cuban women came to play such critical roles in the development of the new society. Espín explained the philosophy that

underlay these organizers’ work:

I always emphasize that at the time we didn’t talk about women’s liberation. We didn’t talk about women’s emancipation, or the struggle for equality ... What we did talk about was participation. ... There was real proof, every day, that the revolution wasn’t just hot air, it wasn’t empty phrases of the kind people were used to hearing from politicians in the past. This was the genuine thing. And women wanted to be part of it. (pp. 29–30)

This is a considerably different perspective from that of feminists in capitalist countries, but it is a useful one to consider, especially given the successes of the Cuban revolution in relation to poor women and in the areas of health and education. (Cuba has the largest numbers of doctors per capita of any country in the world, free education and health care are guaranteed to all citizens, literacy exceeds 99%, and Cubans enjoy a 79-year life expectancy).

The participation of which Espín spoke, though, was neither automatic nor easy. As Ferrer explained, “In those days, women were greatly limited by social norms. They were expected to restrict their interests to the confines of the home and to subordinate themselves to the males in the family. But there was enormous political ferment, and women ... wanted to volunteer to work wherever needed. These feelings were so strong they led women to break with traditions going back thousands of years” (p. 199).

It was the FMC, founded in 1960, that opened the doors to women’s participation and changed the way women — and the entire population — thought about women’s role in society. As Espín explained, “The federation began by focusing on simple tasks that motivated women to reach beyond the home, that made them aware of their own possibilities, capacities, self-worth, and rights. ... Women learned they were capable of the most diverse kinds of activities. As they demonstrated what they could do, they increasingly won social respect. Prejudices began to lose ground” (pp. 202–203).

FMC activities — the mobilizing of literacy and the public health brigade, the retraining of domestic workers, the building of child care centers — are described in loving detail by the three women. One initiative was the Ana Betancourt Schools for Campesinas. Begun in 1961, the schools invited peasant families to send their daughters to Havana to learn to sew. The response was enthusiastic, and eventually more than 21,000 young women enrolled. They learned to make clothes for their families; received medical and dental care; and, critically, became a part of the national discussions. “The young women hadn’t just learned to read and write,” Espín said later of the “Anitas.” “They hadn’t just learned to sew. They had also learned about the revolution. ... They’d learned about the pro-



Granma

“Women learned they were capable of the most diverse kinds of activities,” said Vilma Espín in *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*. “As they demonstrated what they could do, they increasingly won social respect. Prejudices began to lose ground.” Above, 1961, former domestic workers retrained as taxi drivers, previously an all-male occupation, after triumph of Cuban Revolution. Right, cover of Cuban humor magazine in 1961 parodies bourgeois woman’s shock at encountering her former maid, now a bank worker.



grams for health care, for education, how schools were being built. ... They’d become aware of what the revolution meant” (p. 240). Upon graduation, each young woman received her own sewing machine with the instruction to return home and teach 10 others to sew; many, according to Espín went on to become doctors, teachers, technicians, and political leaders.

The challenge that books like *Women in Cuba* bring to social work education is 2-fold. The first and easier challenge is that of bringing a range of global perspectives to the classroom. Cuba’s unique experience should be part of that. The second, more difficult task is related to questions of capitalism. Corporate globalization has bequeathed us a wildly unequal world, and while I have no answers, it is clear that we need to consider what it means to be feminist, justice-oriented social workers in a world bent to the interests of the “1%.” These are questions that Cubans have considered for many years, and it is possible that there is a thing or two that we can learn from them.

The past decade has witnessed a rising interest in Cuba within social work. Several small, well-conceived studies have been published (see Backwith & Mantle, 2009; Strug, 2006) and in 2011, the National Association of Social Workers sponsored two professional research trips to Cuba. Cuba, for its part, is newly committed to “community-based social work.” In Cuba, the 1990s

— the “Special Period” — were characterized by extraordinary hardship as Cuba’s economy reeled from the fall of the Soviet Union and the breakup of the Eastern Bloc. Overnight, Cuba, which had relied on a mono-crop economy and favorable trade agreements with the socialist nations (Cuba’s sugar for machinery, pesticides, parts, and food), was forced to reshape and diversify its economy and open itself to tourism. To ensure that its hard-hit population minimally had access to food, health care, and basic services, Cuba turned to community-based social work. A social work concentration in sociology was developed at the University of Havana, and a paraprofessional social work program for youths was organized for unemployed young people from Cuba’s poorest neighborhoods. These young “emergentes,” enthusiastically praised by Castro, addressed emergent social problems, such as child malnutrition, school absenteeism, and the needs of the elderly (Strug, 2006).

I wrote part of this review in Cuba, which I visited in the summer of 2012. Cuba feels well past the fervor and idealism of its youth, and I do, too. Still, commitments live on. As one Cuban said to me, “I think the United States always thought that if they made things really difficult, the Cuban people would revolt. But we don’t want to be like the United States. We like our medical system and our education system — and our tradition of thinking about the well-being of everyone.” Books like *Women in Cuba*, in concert with new studies and, most important, the lifting of the embargo, are all part of opening the doors between our nations and provide the basis for free and respectful exchanges between the United States and Cuban feminists and social workers.

References:

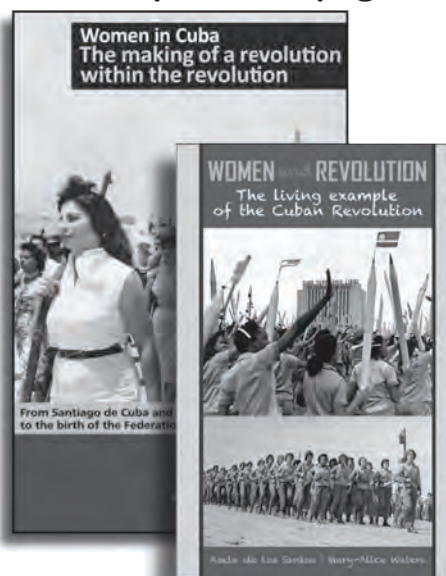
- Backwith, D., & Mantle, G. (2009). Inequalities in health and community-oriented social work: Lessons from Cuba? *International Social Work*, 52, 499–511.
- National Association of Social Workers. (2011). Social services in Cuba: NASW members get a close-up view of community-based aging, health, and child welfare services in Havana. Retrieved from <http://www.naswdc.org/nasw/swan/cubaReport.pdf>
- Strug, D. (2006). Community-oriented social work in Cuba: Government response to emerging social problems. *Social Work Education*, 25, 749–762.



Granma

Students training as volunteer teachers arrive in Varadero to join 1961 massive social campaign that wiped out illiteracy in Cuba.

See special offers with subscription on page 3



Or order online from Pathfinderpress.com

Strike in Tunisia protests killing of opposition leader

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Hundreds of thousands of people responded July 26 to a call by the Tunisian General Union of Labor for a one-day nationwide strike “against terrorism, violence and assassinations,” to protest the killing the day before of Mohamed Brahmi, a prominent opposition leader and member of the National Constituent Assembly. Brahmi was gunned down outside his home near the capital Tunis. The next day some 15,000 to 20,000 joined Brahmi’s funeral.

Brahmi is the second opposition figure to be killed in the last six months in Tunisia. When Chokri Belaid was slain in February, the country was shut down by a nationwide strike. More than 1.5 million people across the country participated in his funeral.

Mass protests toppled the tyranny of Zine al-Abidine in Tunisia in January 2011, initiating a rise of popular mobilizations in the Middle East. The government is currently run by a coalition of three parties headed by Ennahda, an Islamist party associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

“All important cities are in an up-

Farmworkers

Continued from front page
raises and other demands.

The walkouts took place when the blueberry harvest was in full swing. Nearly all the workers are indigenous Mixteca and Trique people, from the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Most return to work year after year at Sakuma Farms, a major operator in the berry-growing and processing industry in this agricultural region north of Seattle.

On July 25 workers gathered in one of the labor camps to hear a report on negotiations from strike committee president Ramón Torres. The committee had done a test-pick on a field to be harvested the next day, Torres said, and negotiated a new rate with the grower. The agreed-upon rate, 37 cents a pound, represented a 23 percent raise over what the company had been paying, and the grower had agreed to negotiate a rate for other fields after company and workers’ representatives did further test-picks.

The rate makes it possible to make \$12 or more an hour, Torres said, and workers will have the right to know the company-recorded weights for their picks.

Torres said they were still meeting on other demands. Pickers are concerned about losing their jobs when the company begins bringing in 160 contract workers from Mexico in August, under the federal government’s H-2A temporary “guest worker” program. The company says it needs more workers to avoid a repeat of last year’s harvest, when 15 acres of blackberries rotted in the fields.

“Now we are working again, though everything isn’t fixed,” said Torres. “Something very important is that youths under 16 years just got a check for money that wasn’t paid for time they had worked.” He explained that the company is beginning to replace old, bedbug-infested mattresses in the workers’ housing, one of the strikers’ demands aimed at improving their living conditions. The farmworkers want to keep negotiating, he said, “and so does the boss, and that’s good.”

roar,” said Hamadi Aouina in a phone interview from Paris July 29. “Tens of thousands are protesting across the country, demanding dissolution of the National Constituent Assembly elected in October 2011 and the fall of the government.” Aouina is an executive member in the Paris area of the People’s Front coalition, to which Brahmi also belonged.

After Brahmi’s funeral cops assaulted thousands of demonstrators who had joined a sit-in in front of the parliament building, initiated by assembly members who resigned in protest against the Ennahda-led government. As of July 29, 72 members had quit.

There have been increased violent assaults over the last year by ultraright Islamist groups against women, artists,

Vigilante acquitted in killing of Trayvon Martin

Continued from front page

ager. After asking the self-appointed “neighborhood watch” captain a few questions, cops had just let him walk.

But after six weeks of demonstrations, Gov. Rick Scott appointed a special prosecutor who filed second-degree murder charges. After the jury heard the closing statements, Judge Debra Nelson instructed them to also consider manslaughter.

The second-degree murder charge required the jury to find Zimmerman guilty only if convinced that he exhibited “depraved indifference” and was of “depraved mind without regard for human life.” At the start of the jury deliberations Judge Nelson said that even to find Zimmerman guilty of manslaughter would require proof he intended to kill Martin.

Zimmerman’s attorneys did not argue the case based on Florida’s Stand Your Ground law. But the judge instructed the jury that if Zimmerman “was not engaged in an unlawful activity,” he “had the right to stand his ground and meet force with force, including deadly force if he reasonably believed that it was necessary to do so to prevent death or great bodily harm.”

Like millions of others, some of the jurors have come forward to say they were uncomfortable with Zimmerman getting off scot-free.

“That’s where I felt confused,” Juror B29, identified only as Maddy, said on the ABC’s “Good Morning America” show July 25. “But as the law was read to me, if you have no proof that he killed him intentionally, you can’t say he’s guilty.” Maddy is a nurses aide of Puerto Rican descent. “George Zimmerman got away with murder,” she said.

Zimmerman’s vigilante attack

Zimmerman called 911 after seeing Martin walking through the gated Retreat at Twin Lakes complex in Sanford, where he was staying with his father. “We’ve had some break-ins in my neighborhood,” Zimmerman told the dispatcher, “and there’s a real suspicious guy.” He then followed Martin in his truck.

Noticing a stranger following him, Martin picked up his pace to get home. “These assholes. They always get away,” Zimmerman complained to the dispatcher. Disregarding the dispatch-



Reuters/Anis Mili

July 26 protest in Tunis condemns assassination of opposition leader Mohamed Brahmi.

journalists, bourgeois liberal figures and trade unions.

In response to the July 27 police crackdown, more than 10,000 came back the next day to break their fast

after sunset, as part of observing Ramadan. After staying away most of the night, the police charged the demonstrators in the early morning hours, injuring many.

er’s instruction not to pursue Martin, Zimmerman got out of his vehicle and moved, noticeably out of breath on the phone, well into the apartment complex.

According to Zimmerman’s story, Martin suddenly appeared and said, “You got a problem?” and then punched him. He said Martin got on top of him and began banging Zimmerman’s head on the concrete sidewalk.

Claiming that he feared for his life, Zimmerman said he drew his gun and fired, hitting Martin right in the heart.

Zimmerman told police investigators his pistol was in a holster concealed behind his right hip. He said Martin was straddling him with his knees near Zimmerman’s armpits. Zimmerman has never explained how under those conditions he reached his gun, removed it from the holster, loaded a bullet into the chamber, and fired.

The most plausible scenario is that Zimmerman — on a self-assigned vigilante mission to dispense “justice” on a teenager he considered “suspicious” — had drawn and readied his weapon before the physical confrontation ensued.

Zimmerman’s lawyers sought to introduce evidence that showed Martin was in many ways a typical teenage male, to smear his character and paint him as the aggressor. At the urging of the prosecution, the judge suppressed it. This included text messages Martin had sent to friends about fights he got into, a school suspension and marijuana use.

Calls for federal civil rights charges

After the acquittal the NAACP, National Organization for Women and many others called on the U.S. government to bring federal civil rights charges against Zimmerman, arguing the killing was motivated by racial hatred, despite the lack of concrete evidence to that effect. Liberal media often described Zimmerman, who is half Peruvian, as a “white Hispanic” in promoting that view.

“Racial profiling is a menace,” NOW stated. “We will not let the unsubstantiated — and racist — fears of some run roughshod over the rights and lives of people of color. Now activists have added their voices to the groundswell demanding that the Department of Justice investigate George Zimmerman for violating the civil rights of Trayvon Martin.”

Rumors that Attorney General Eric Holder was considering civil rights charges were floated to the press immediately after the verdict in an effort to placate anger. But President Barack Obama made a statement July 19 strongly indicating that was not going to happen.

The president spoke abstractly about problems of racial prejudice, and made critical comments about Stand Your Ground laws, while defending the trial and verdict as a case closed. But he avoided entirely the real heart of the issue — Zimmerman the vigilante taking justice into his own hands, protected by the laws, courts and cops.

And he added other irrelevant and dubious points that further clouded the issue. “African-American young men are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system” and “disproportionately both victims and perpetrators of violence,” he said, adding that “Trayvon Martin was probably statistically more likely to be shot by a peer than he was by someone else.”

The six-person all-women jury was comprised of one Puerto Rican and five Caucasians. Many working people were uncomfortable that no African-Americans were represented.

“After seeing the quality of the evidence presented by the state, the diversity of the jury really didn’t matter in the end,” Larry Handfield, a prominent African-American Miami criminal defense lawyer, said, commenting on the trial in the July 13 issue of the *Journal Times*. “But it would have helped the community in giving more credibility to the decision to acquit Zimmerman.”

But the fact that there was insufficient evidence to convict Zimmerman of either charge brought against him under the laws as written has not placated widespread indignation that the vigilante killer got off scot-free.

“It’s not only Black people who are disappointed,” Caroline Wade, who works at Sun Life Stadium in Miami, told the *Militant*. “If you see someone and stalk them, you are looking for trouble. After this verdict, it doesn’t matter what color you are, you can’t walk the street without the risk of being violated.”

Dean Hazlewood in Miami contributed to this article.

René González: ‘I went to US to fight actions harming Cuba’

Reprinted here is part of an interview with René González, one of the Cuban Five, that was published in the June 15 issue of *Escambray*, a weekly newspaper in Sancti Spíritus province in central Cuba.

In the last issue, the *Militant* ran another section of the interview, centered on González’s experiences in U.S. prisons and his relations with fellow workers behind bars. Here he talks about his mission as a Cuban state security agent along with Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández. The five revolutionaries were gathering information on activities and plans for violent attacks and provocations by U.S.-based Cuban-American organizations bent on overthrowing the socialist revolution in Cuba and restoring capitalist rule there in alliance with Washington.

González’s mission began Dec. 8, 1990, when he “stole” a Cuban crop-dusting plane from the San Nicolás de Bari air base near Havana and flew to the U.S. naval base in Boca Chica Key, Fla., where he was greeted as a hero by opponents of the Cuban Revolution and welcomed into the circles of rightist paramilitary groups, including Brothers to the Rescue, Democracy Movement, National Democratic Unity Party and the Cuban American National Foundation.

A campaign for release of the Five is being waged internationally. Today all but René González remain in prison, with sentences ranging from 17 years and nine months to a double life term plus 15 years. In May, having served 13 years in prison and half of a three-year term of “supervised release,” González won his fight to return to Cuba, where he was reunited with his wife Olga and their daughters, Irmita and Ivette.



Before leaving, you left Olga some money and the lyrics of a song by Pablo Milanés inside a magazine. Was it a coded message?

“It’s difficult to leave when your family has no idea what you’re doing,” González said. “One of the hardest things on such a mission is convincing people you respect that you are a traitor. In all these years, the most difficult tasks I carried out were in Cuba, both times in San Nicolás de Bari: ending the process of becoming a member of the Cuban Communist Party and stealing an airplane. There are things that are not just tasks but are something very hard for a human being. Leaving your family behind is one of them; it’s rough. I left Olga money I had saved along with that song — I don’t even remember which one — inside a copy of *Bohemia* magazine.

I told Irmita a secret — she was six years old but very discreet and her lips were sealed. “I’m going to leave a little gift here for your mom for when I come back at the end of the year. This is a secret to surprise your mom,” I said.

“Mommy, mommy, daddy left this here!” — that’s how Olguita found it.

How many times did you review the plan to commandeer the aircraft that took you to Boca Chica, where you arrived with the fuel tank almost empty?

None. In the circumstances in which everything happened, it was impossible to review anything. We were entering the Special Period, so parachuting and air sports in general were among the first activities to be cut back. It all ended up being improvised, except for my decision that if the opportunity presented itself, I was going to go. I had to find the most opportune moment and make the most of it, that’s how I arrived on an empty tank. The opportunity appeared and I did a quick calculation. I said to myself, “The fuel will be just enough — I have to take the plunge.” It was probably the riskiest, most dangerous flight of my life.”

On arriving in Miami you made a statement on the so-called Radio



Vicente Brito

René González and Olga Salanueva, his wife, during interview with *Escambray* newspaper.

Martí saying that you felt like a veritable Christopher Columbus when you saw the Florida Keys. How did you manage to take on the persona of a traitor and make yourself credible before public opinion?

I asked myself that question from the moment they proposed the mission. I don’t think anyone can train for that. Besides, I was the complete opposite. I’ve never been a good actor. You can’t find someone who is a revolutionary and a faker. What’s the key? The sense of duty, the satisfaction of deceiving someone who wants to inflict harm on my people. Beyond that, maybe some personal traits make it possible for you to pull it off.

I remember when I first met Félix Rodríguez, “El Gato” [“The Cat,” the CIA agent involved in the 1967 murder of Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia]. It was the same day Brothers to the Rescue was created. The night before, I had been at the home of a pilot who had hijacked a plane in the 1960s and was the head of a group known as CUPA, Cuban Pilots Association. While I was with him [Brothers chief José] Basulto called to let him know. “Listen, we’re going to set up a group that will be called Brothers to the Rescue, and we’ll announce it at a press conference at the Miami airport.” And the guy invited me.

I go there, and when I walk into the conference room they say, “Oh, look, the one who hijacked the plane.” All of a sudden they tell me, “Look, we want to introduce you to Félix Rodríguez, the man who killed Che.” I don’t know what happened to me — it was an electric shock. I shook hands with him and said, “You don’t say, *compadre*, so you’re the man.” I thought to myself, amazed: how could I have done that? When I left I told myself: now I know I can carry out this task.

Some people might think that as an intelligence agent you must have had a comfortable life. How did you survive financially during those first few months?

I had the advantage of having many relatives there who helped me. I didn’t have a penny to spare, but I did have a place to live and food on the table. I was welcomed by my grandmother, and of course I began to work as soon as I arrived. I did a variety of jobs, but my goal always was to get

closer to the world of aviation.

After Brothers to the Rescue was created I joined it. To advance in those circles, I had to spend much of what I earned on getting a lot of licenses, which are very expensive. First I worked in a store for miserable pay. Then I had a job selling low-quality heaters, but I quit that because I had to mislead people. I did flooring and roofing. I had a modest lifestyle. My main goal was always to upgrade my qualifications as a pilot.

You joined Brothers to the Rescue in May 1991. You flew over Havana with Basulto, dropping pamphlets. How could you maintain your composure when you shared the cockpit with that terrorist?

I didn’t go to the United States to fight people. I went there to fight against actions that were causing harm to Cuba, that could harm the Cuban people, Cuban property, our leaders. I went there to keep the country alerted against such activities. In those circumstances you can’t allow yourself to dwell on the personal element that repels you — you have to detach yourself from it.

On these flights you took journalists from TV stations like Univisión that were waging their anti-Cuba campaign.

In the beginning Brothers to the Rescue was probably one of the most effective psychological warfare operations ever carried out. It was waged around the issue of the *balseros* [rafters], a complex question that was easy to manipulate. The organization was founded by Basulto and a group of Bay of Pigs veterans, in particular from groups called infiltration teams. These groups had been trained by the CIA in the 1960s to carry out sabotage, infiltration and extraction operations, and psychological warfare.

Who are the Cuban Five?



Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.



“We know that r our side, but to v need a jury of mi throughout the v make our truth k —Gerardo

Cover price \$3 with *Militant* Order from pathfin or contact a distrib page 10 for spe

They saw the possibility of using the balseros issue to wage a two-track psychological war: on one hand, to provoke illegal emigration from Cuba in order to destabilize Cuban society, and on the other hand, to portray Cuba in the most negative light possible in the world, as a hell from which people were fleeing. That was during the Special Period, a very propitious moment for those campaigns, with many people wanting to leave because of the economic hardships. ... They made good use of that situation.

At the same time, a euphoria was developing in Miami around all of the problems Cuba had and the problems it didn't have — that is, the ones they made up.

In that context, Brothers to the Rescue was a very effective propaganda tool. It also appealed to humanitarian sentiment. You had the rafters, individuals who were half-dead in a raft, and they would go rescue them. These combined elements made it a very strong psychological-warfare operation.

Later they evolved. As the Special Period worsened in Cuba, their hopes of social explosion grew. They began to act on the expectation, in the medium term, of an explosion in Cuba, of people going into the streets. What happened on the Malecón in August 1994 was a boost for them, wind in their sails.*

In this context they began to prepare violent actions. At our trial, evidence was presented that Brothers to the Rescue had been preparing deadly devices to be launched against Cuba, that could be used by disgruntled people against the police. These devices were like flares. Unlike fireworks, however, they were loaded with pellets and gunpowder that could damage and kill. ...

What happened? The so-called rafters crisis developed, where more than 30,000 people emigrated illegally to the United States in 1994. When Washington and Cuba signed the immigration accords [Joint Communiqué of Sept. 9, 1994, and Joint Declaration of May 2, 1995], Brothers to the Rescue's business collapsed, because the Cubans who went out to sea were going to be intercepted by the Coast Guard and returned to Cuba.

This was a hard blow for Brothers to the Rescue. They shifted toward increased provocations, trying to create a confrontation between Cuba and the United States. That's when they started the overflights, the provocations, the famous flotillas. There had been one in April 1994, and then they began to step these up in conjunction with the Democracy Movement. So that's what happened right up to the events of Feb. 24, 1996, which became a coup de grace for Brothers to the Rescue.

What concrete missions did you carry out?

I was in several organizations. Brothers to the Rescue was the first I joined. Obviously the main task was to keep Cuba informed of every-

thing they were doing, all the preparations for the flotillas. ... From the beginning Basulto conceived of Brothers to the Rescue as an organization that, besides focusing on the rafters, would carry out violent acts. In 1992 he consulted with me about carrying out an incursion with his planes to sabotage the national electrical system.

Later Basulto was involved in buying a Russian combat plane, a MiG-23, which he wanted to use in a violent action. It's very common in the United States that when certain aircraft are decommissioned, they are bought by some private party. He also wanted to buy a Czech military training aircraft.

I got involved with the PUND, the National Democratic Unity Party, which carried out incursions in 1992 and 1993 along Cuba's north coast, mainly in the area between the Varadero and Cayo Coco resorts. A PUND commando group murdered a compañero in Caibarién. I was involved in their infiltration actions. The United Liberation Command also took part in these activities.

Those groups also had to be tracked. A paramilitary group of the CANF [Cuban American National Foundation] obtained various kinds of equipment, including aircraft. They had to be located. That was part of my responsibilities. I found out the whereabouts of Posada Carriles [a CIA-trained paramilitary responsible for the bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados in 1976 that killed more than 70 people] through an indiscretion committed during the 1990s. Those were the kinds of activities we carried out.

Why did you cooperate with the FBI in dismantling drug operations?

I dismantled two drug operations. Why? First, everyone knows Cuba's position against drugs. But drug trafficking there played a double role — it's not just the harm they do as drugs, but the money was being used to finance the PUND and the United Liberation Command. To the degree you cut off their sources of financing, you would block their operations against Cuba.

It's difficult to assess how many operations were not carried through. For example, once we sent Tony "El

Venezuela hosts conference in solidarity with Cuba



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

CARACAS, Venezuela — More than 500 people from 35 countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, the U.S., Canada, Europe and the

Middle East participated in the VII Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba here, July 24-27. A report will appear in next week's *Militant*.

Defense of the Cuban Five was a prominent theme in several sessions of the conference.

Inset, Irma Schwerert, mother of René González, and Ailí Labañino, daughter of Ramón Labañino, speak on panel "The Five after 15 Years of Injustice." Above, audience of hundreds in conference workshop.

—JONATHAN SILBERMAN



Gordo" [Fatso], who was financing the PUND, to prison. They were left without money. These were hard blows for them.

As an intelligence agent, how did you deal with the feeling of being watched?

As part of this work you have to act in a certain way and remain alert. It can do you harm if you overdo it. But you can never be completely relaxed. You have to find a balance. You have to tell yourself, "I have to remain alert and careful," but on the other hand, you can't drive yourself crazy.

In the midst of all of this, you were determined to reunite with Olga and Irmita. To what lengths did you go to achieve this? They say you even went to the U.S. Capitol.

Many considerations came into play. [Cuban-American Congresswoman] Ileana Ros-Lehtinen didn't have the power to bring Olguita over there. That was part of the whole picture. Obviously, it was always my priority to reunite with them. But it took work because of a series of circumstances that had to come together. We were apart for

six difficult years, but finally they were able to go there in December 1996.

You went to welcome them at the Miami airport dressed in a suit and tie and carrying flowers.

Our reunion had two conflicting sides. Unfortunately I had to go there accompanied by a character who was not very ... [Ramón Saúl Sánchez, leader of the Democracy Movement]. But it was as if Olguita and I got married again. We had been married since 1983. After six years apart, it was beautiful and at the same time difficult, because of what Irmita had to go through. But love conquered.

Ivette was born from that love. How did Gerardo Hernández, without a child of his own, enjoy Ivette's birth?

Gerardo was always sensitive to everything related to family. Even before Ivette was born, he was very attentive to Irmita's arrival. Afterward he would turn up with a gift here, a kind touch there, and the same toward Olguita. We were like a family. Actually, under those conditions it was the only family we had, in the sense that they were the only people you could talk to about everything. I had relatives over there who didn't share our way of thinking but who proved to be very kind. Gerardo took on that role in a very human way, with a great capacity for love; with Ivette he was very happy.



Cuban revolutionary René González penetrated rightist paramilitary groups that were carrying out provocations and planning violent attacks against Cuba. From left, José Basulto, CIA-trained counterrevolutionary and founder of Brothers to the Rescue; González (kneeling); and Juan Pablo Roque, Cuban state security agent who also penetrated group.

ight is on
vin we
illions
world to
known."

Hernández

— \$5

subscription
derpress.com
utor listed on
pecial offer

‘The duty of every revolutionist is to make the revolution’

Below is an excerpt from The First and Second Declarations of Havana, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. The declarations were adopted by million-strong assemblies of the Cuban people. The selection is from the Second Declaration, delivered by Fidel Castro on Feb. 4, 1962. Copyright © 2007 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

What Cuba can give to the peoples, and has already given, is its example.

And what does the Cuban Revolution teach? That revolution is possible, that the peoples can make it, that in the contemporary world there are no forces capable of halting the liberation movement of the people.

Our triumph would never have been feasible if the revolution itself had not been inexorably destined to arise out of existing conditions in our socioeconomic reality, a reality that exists to an even greater degree in a good number of Latin American countries. ...

Where the roads are closed to the peoples, where the repression of workers and peasants is fierce, where the rule of the Yankee monopolies is strongest, the first and most important task is to understand that it is neither fair nor correct to beguile the peoples with the futile and conciliationist illusion of wresting power by legal means—



Bohemia
“What does the Cuban Revolution teach? That revolution is possible,” states Second Declaration of Havana. Above, rally supporting its proclamation, Feb. 4, 1962, in Havana.

means that do not and will not exist—from the hands of ruling classes that are entrenched in all the state positions, monopolize education, own all the means of communication, possess infinite financial resources—a power that the monopolies and oligarchies will defend by blood and fire and with the might of their police and armies.

The duty of every revolutionist is to make the revolution. It is true that the revolution will triumph in the Americas and throughout the world, but it is not for revolutionists to sit in the doorways of their houses waiting for the corpse of imperialism to pass by. The role of Job does not suit a revolutionist. Each year that the liberation of Latin America is speeded up will mean the lives of millions of children saved, millions of intellects saved for culture, an infinite quantity of pain spared the people. Even if the Yankee imperialists prepare a bloody drama for Latin America, they will not succeed in crushing the peoples’ struggles; they will only arouse universal hatred against themselves. And such a drama will also mark the fall of their greedy and Stone Age system. ...

This epic before us is going to be written by the hungry Indian masses, the peasants without land, the exploited workers. It is going to be written by the progressive masses, the honest and brilliant intellectuals, who so

greatly abound in our suffering Latin American lands. A struggle of masses and of ideas. An epic that will be carried forward by our peoples, mistreated and scorned by the imperialists; our people, invisible to them until today, who have begun to give them sleepless nights. Imperialism considered us a powerless and submissive flock. Now it begins to be terrified of that flock—a gigantic flock of 200 million Latin Americans in whom Yankee monopoly capitalism today sees its gravediggers.

This toiling humanity, these inhumanly exploited men and women, these paupers, controlled by the system of whip and overseer, have not counted or have counted little. From the dawn of independence their fate has been the same: Indians, gauchos, mestizos, zambos, quadroons, whites without property or income, all this human mass that formed the ranks of the “nation” that was never theirs, who fell by the millions, who were cut to bits, who won independence from the mother country for the bourgeoisie, who were shut out from their share of the rewards, who continued to occupy the lowest rung on the ladder of social benefits, continued to die of hunger, curable diseases, and neglect for lack of things that never reached them: ordinary bread, a hospital bed, medicine that cures, a helping hand.

But now, from one end of the con-

tinental to the other, they are signaling clearly that the hour has come: the hour of their redemption. Now this anonymous mass, this America of color, somber, taciturn America, which all over the continent sings with the same sadness and disillusionment, now this mass is beginning to enter definitively into its own history, is beginning to write it with its own blood, is beginning to suffer and die for it.

Because now in the fields and mountains of the Americas, on its hillsides, on its flatlands and in its jungles, in isolated fields and in the crush of its cities, on the banks of its great oceans and rivers, this world is beginning to tremble. Ardent fists are raised, ready to die for what is theirs, to win those rights that for five hundred years have been laughed at by one and all. Yes, now history will have to take the poor of America into account, the exploited and spurned of America, who have decided to begin writing their history for themselves for all time. Already they can be seen on the roads, on foot, day after day, in an endless march of hundreds of miles up to the “Olympian” heights of government to demand their rights.

Already they can be seen armed with stones, sticks, machetes, from one end to the other, each day, occupying lands, sinking stakes into the land that belongs to them and defending it with their lives. They can be seen carrying signs, slogans, banners; unfurling them in the mountain and prairie winds. And the wave of trembling anger, of demands for justice, of claims for rights trampled underfoot, which is beginning to sweep the lands of Latin America, will not stop. That wave will swell with each passing day. For that wave is composed of the greatest number, the majorities in every respect, those whose labor amasses the wealth and creates all value, those who turn the wheels of history. Now they are awakening from the long, brutalizing sleep to which they had been subjected.

For this great mass of humanity has said, “Enough!” and has begun to march. And their march of giants will not be halted until they conquer true independence—for which they have died in vain more than once.

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 4025 S. Western Ave. Zip: 90062. Tel: (323) 295-2600. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net
San Francisco: 5482 Mission St. Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

FLORIDA: Miami: 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 757-8869. E-mail: swpmiami@att.net

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. E-mail: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 806 W. Washington Blvd. Suite 202. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 455-0111. E-mail: Chicagoswp@att.net

IOWA: Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 707-1779. E-mail: swpdesmoines@fastmail.fm

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Zip: 55414. Tel: (612) 729-1205. E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

NEBRASKA, Lincoln: Tel: (402) 217-4906. E-mail: swplincn@windstream.net
Omaha: P.O. Box 7908. Zip: 68107. Tel.: (402) 779-7697. E-mail: swpomaha@fastmail.net

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 3701 Pulaski Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 225-1270. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 476-0733. E-mail: houstonswp@att.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: clc_can@bellnet.ca

FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 4/125 Grafton Rd., Grafton. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 369-1223. E-mail: clauack@xtra.co.nz

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: (020) 7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@fastmail.fm
Manchester: Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26–28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. E-mail: clmanchr@gmail.com

August BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

The First and Second Declarations of Havana

Nowhere are the questions of revolutionary strategy that today confront men and women on the front lines of struggles in the Americas addressed with greater truthfulness and clarity.

\$10. **Special price: \$7.50**



Coal Miners on Strike

From the pages of the *Militant*

\$7. **Special price: \$5.25**

The History of the Russian Revolution

by Leon Trotsky

\$38. **Special price: \$28.50**

Teamster Power

by Farrell Dobbs

Describes the growth and consolidation of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis and its class-struggle leadership, and the 11-state over-the-road organizing campaign that brought union power for the first time to much of the Midwest.

\$19. **Special price: \$14.25**



The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)

by Leon Trotsky

\$30. **Special price: \$22.50**

La revolución traicionada (The Revolution Betrayed)

by Leon Trotsky

\$20. **Special price: \$15**

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT
WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM
OFFER GOOD UNTIL AUGUST 31

Vigilantism: enemy of working class

George Zimmerman, who admits to fatally shooting 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, is a vigilante — a self-appointed judge, jury and executioner — whose murderous actions were backed by the Sanford cops who refused to indict him.

The die was cast when the “neighborhood watchman” moves beyond watching and exits his vehicle, armed and “ready for action” to pursue Martin — whom he knew nothing about, yet characterized as “suspicious” and an “asshole.” He disregards instructions from the cop dispatcher who instructed him to stay put. The killing is an example of how the bold, risk-taking vigilante, who “takes matters into his own hands” is more dangerous to the working class even than the cops, the organized and armed force whose job it is to protect the property and prerogatives of the propertied rulers and, as such, have some constraints on their conduct.

Based on the killer’s version of events, Martin responded as many teenage males would have when pursued by a creepy stranger. And for that his life was taken. (Only the kind of discipline young militants learn through collective experience in working-class combat and social struggle can prepare the countless cocksure young-men-in-becoming to consider a more prudent response.)

Vigilantism has a long and deep history in the U.S. and has always been directed against the interests of working people. It has served as a tool of ruling-class terror to keep the oppressed and exploited “in-line,” divided and fearful. Targets have included African-Americans and all defenders of Black rights, other victims of discrimination from Mexicans and Chinese to Catholics, Jews and Mormons; as well as militant workers and their small farmer allies, unionists, communists and other targets of the propertied rulers.

Frontier “justice” and lynchings date back centuries. Countless Hollywood movies feature vigilantes in the West riding into town, hunting down and killing rustlers, Native Americans and others, then riding off into the sunset.

Among the registered gains of the revolutionary U.S. Civil War that overthrew the slavocracy was passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. These amendments outlawed slavery, made it the law of the land that all men could vote, and granted power to the federal government to take action against Ku Klux Klanners and other vigilante thugs who employed lynchings and mob violence against the social progress of Radical Reconstruction. Anti-vigilante laws were adopted in many areas of the country. The abolitionists and their allies who dominated the Congress sent federal troops to the South to defend freed Blacks and their allies.

But with the 1877 withdrawal of federal troops from the South and other counterrevolutionary moves by the Northern rulers, the reactionary forces were given free rein and were ultimately successful in dealing the greatest blows ever inflicted on the working class in the U.S., a body blow that included the imposition of Jim Crow segregation.

Through a series of Supreme Court decisions, the rulers overturned the newly adopted constitutional protections against mob rule and vigilante

lynchings. The black-robed agents of the bosses declared protection of basic rights was a matter for the states, and Blacks and other workers couldn’t use federal constitutional protections to defend themselves.

In 1873 some 150 heavily armed vigilantes attacked and murdered an equal number of outgunned African-Americans, many members of the city’s militia, who were defending the county courthouse in Colfax, La. The U.S. Attorney in New Orleans indicted nearly 100 of the attackers under the enforcement provisions of the 14th Amendment, affording equal protection of the laws to all. When the case reached the Supreme Court, the justices unanimously overturned the convictions in 1876, ruling the amendment only applied to actions carried out by state governments. This notorious ruling — still the law of the land — was a milestone blow to the fight against vigilantism and racist violence.

The need to push back and defend against all forms of vigilante “justice” is not a thing of the past. In fact, it will become a bigger question in the future when a sharpening class struggle leads the capitalist rulers to employ their armed state power — supplemented by deputized vigilantes and “extra-legal” goons — against fighting workers and their organizations.

Addressing the danger and class character of vigilantism can help give perspective to millions of working people angered and seeking a fighting course of action in response to the vigilante killer George Zimmerman walking free. Efforts along these lines include the fights to overturn pro-vigilante Stand Your Ground laws now on the books in 21 states.

Another trial not in our interests

Zimmerman would never have been brought to trial if not for the popular mass demonstrations demanding his prosecution that won an important victory. The jury did not find Zimmerman guilty beyond a reasonable doubt on the specific charges brought against him and based on the evidence presented. Calls to open a new trial on federal civil rights violations by various groups from the National Organization for Women to the NAACP — demands which finds a hearing among many with justifiable outrage — are not in the interests of working people.

Starting a new prosecution against Zimmerman — in fact, double jeopardy — would set a precedent that would erode hard-won protections from the state registered in the Bill of Rights and other protections that we need to organize to fight more effectively against the deepening ruling class offensive against our jobs, wages and political rights. And no evidence has been presented that shows Zimmerman was motivated by racial hatred when he killed Martin.

Blind pursuit of retribution cannot advance the struggles of the oppressed and exploited. On this question the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, along with millions of Cuban toilers, stood on the highest moral ground after the victorious revolutionary war, preventing mob justice and vengeance to befall hated and murderous cops and thugs of the fallen Fulgencio Batista dictatorship.

It is only the working class that has or ever will claim such high ground. And only on such moral grounds can the working class lead humanity to a world free of exploitation and oppression that are part and parcel of capitalist society.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Detroit bankruptcy

Continued from front page

the *Wall Street Journal*. At the same time, \$7 billion in municipal bonds secured by casino profits and utility taxes, held by the propertied rich, are protected.

However, Orr has also threatened to force wealthy general-obligation bondholders — whose \$530 million in investments are guaranteed in the state constitution — to take a substantial “haircut.”

Working people in Detroit have been pummeled by the capitalist economic crisis. The official unemployment rate in May was 16.3 percent. The city’s population, currently 700,000, has declined 25 percent since 2000. More than one-third of workers live below the government’s official poverty level, according to the U.S. Census.

The city of Detroit, like all U.S. government bodies, has financed its day-to-day operations through selling municipal bonds. The \$3.7 trillion municipal bond market is a prerogative of the very rich. These pieces of paper are guaranteed by the “full faith and credit” of the government agency that issues them.

The fact that Orr threatens to go after some bondholders has evoked a fierce outcry from those who defend the municipal bond market as sacrosanct. Such proposals “would flatten the traditional hierarchy of creditors, putting ... a retired librarian on par with an investor holding a general obligation bond,” the *New York Times* said.

While workers’ benefits are slashed and union contracts torn up by bankruptcy courts, capitalist investors, contractors and others have been preparing to cash in on the backs of the bankruptcy.

Orr and others have made it clear that once the debts are wiped clean and health care, pensions and union contracts gutted, the city will issue new bonds for a round of construction and other projects, promising large profits for those in the know who get in early.

US uses ship seizure to smear Cuba, NKorea

BY LOUIS MARTIN

The July 15 seizure by Panamanian authorities of a North Korean cargo ship sailing from Cuba is being used by Washington and its allies to trample over the sovereignty of Pyongyang and Havana, with charges the ship’s cargo violated an arms embargo against North Korea imposed by the U.N. Security Council under Washington’s prodding. The ship was exporting Cuban sugar and transporting Cuban arms for repair in North Korea.

Acting on a “tip” from U.S. intelligence that the ship was smuggling narcotics, Panamanian authorities intercepted the 450-foot Chong Chon Gang as it prepared to cross the Panama Canal, heading for home.

Panamanian authorities forcibly took over the ship after a five-day standoff. The 35 North Korean crew members were arrested after putting up fierce resistance and destroying the ship’s electrical system. The North Korean government demanded July 17 that the ship and its crew be released. The crew has been charged with attempting to transport undeclared weapons through the canal.

In the following days, the Panamanian government asked the U.N. to investigate whether there had been a breach of sanctions imposed on North Korea by the U.N. Security Council under the self-serving fig leaf of “nuclear nonproliferation.”

Cuba’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement July 16 saying that, in addition to 10,000 tons of sugar, the ship “transported 240 metric tons of [Soviet-era] obsolete defensive weapons — two anti-aircraft missile complexes Volga and Pechora, nine missiles in parts and spares, two Mig-21 Bis and 15 motors for this type of airplane, all of it manufactured in the mid-twentieth century — to be repaired and returned to Cuba.”

The agreement with North Korea, the Cuban statement said, was aimed at filling “the need to maintain our defensive capacity in order to preserve national sovereignty.”

After a week of searching, Panamanian agents have found nothing not declared in Cuba’s statement.

U.N. Security Council representatives are expected to arrive in Panama sometime after Aug. 4.

Koreans celebrate

Continued from front page

imposed on the people of that country in 1945 in collaboration with the government of Josef Stalin in the Soviet Union. This is the last remaining national division coming out of the interimperialist slaughter of World War II.

The U.S. bases in Korea are part of Washington’s massive air and naval domination of the Pacific — including some nine nuclear-armed submarines — stretching from Hawaii, to Australia, the Philippines, Okinawa, Diego Garcia and beyond.

According to the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Korea, some 300 delegations from 80 countries joined the 60th anniversary celebrations here. More next week.